



The Institute of Quarrying Australia  
50th National Conference



**QUARRYING 2007 – ABSTRACT**  
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**ABSTRACT**

Most people associate nature conservation with the protection of biodiversity. Geoconservation, or the conservation of geodiversity, is an area of conservation which is not as well understood.

The need for nature conservation is widely accepted by biologists and other natural scientists. The approach to nature conservation across the world tends to concentrate on the conservation of fauna and flora whilst virtually ignoring the geological foundation on which this has evolved. In part this could be because many people consider geo features are robust which is not necessarily the case.

Earth scientists are not trained in conservation theory and have had little input into the development of conservation strategies and policies, particularly as they relate to geoconservation. The majority of earth scientists are trained and employed by industry. To be involved in conservation could be seen to be contrary to the goals of the profession. This need not be the case.

There is a very close link between geodiversity and biodiversity and a holistic approach to the conservation of natural diversity can be achieved by managing and conserving both the living and non-living aspects of the natural world. Biodiversity is reliant on geodiversity and ecosystems also depend on their non-living parts be they bedrock, landforms, soils to function properly.

Where conservation values for geo features have been recognised there has been a tendency to concentrate on the spectacular (eg karst, active volcanic and glacial sites), scientifically significant (eg type sections) or those with evolutionary links (eg fossil sites). There are over five hundred and fifty World Heritage Areas in the world and of these thirty six have been listed for their geo values. These generally include biological values. Only three have been listed for geo values other than (active) volcanic, fossil, glacial and karst values. These sites are Gros Morne National Park in Canada, the Devils Causeway in Ireland and Macquarie Island.

Geomorphological or landform features can be impacted by developments such as excavation because the shape of the feature can be altered but the quarrying or mining industries can



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actually be of benefit to geoconservation by exposing significant geological sites which would not otherwise be visible.